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Teacher Toolkit

How to maximize your time

Embarc strives to direct students into the most meaningful and powerful postsecondary and life pathways. To do that, it is important that students engage in experienced-based learning opportunities that help them *discover* who they are and where they belong, *understand* who they want to become and where they want to go, and have opportunities to *lead* - programming at their school and through taking ownership of roles in their community.

Principles of experiential learning that drive Embarc curriculum.

- **Participant Centered -** Experiential learning involves participants emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically to actively engage in the experience. To do this, the facilitator gradually fades into the background after setting up an environment of trust, safety, and support so they can be an active participant. The facilitator takes on a limited leadership role in order to make decisions that maximize the potential of the experience while still obtaining the learning that comes from the experience along with the students.
- **Agency:** A sense of choice and control is imperative. Learners must perceive internal freedom and independence - making choices about experiences, taking responsibility in experiences, and feeling in control of their learning.
- **Relevant and Meaningful** Relevancy and meaning are key to learning. Learners need to understand the purpose behind activities and feel the material has intrinsic value, relating to real life in both present and future situations.
- **Reflection** Participants must have time to reflect. Reflection involves thoughtful time connecting the previous experience to real-life situations as well as discovering their own meaning and understanding from the activity or experience.

Key factors and foundational components outlined in Foundations for Young Adult Success by The University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research that drives the Embarc curriculum.

- **Integrated Identity** is a sense of internal consistency of who one is across time and across multiple social identities. An integrated identity serves as an internal framework for making choices and provides a stable base from which one can act in the world.
- **Mindsets** are beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the external world, and the interaction between the two. They are the default lenses that individuals use to process everyday experiences. Mindsets reflect a person's unconscious biases, natural tendencies, and past experiences.
- **Values** are ideals or beliefs about what is good or bad and what is desirable or undesirable. They are important, enduring, and often culturally defined. Values develop through a process of exploration and experimentation, where young people make sense of their experiences and refine what they hold as important ideals.

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Keeping these principles and key factors in mind, Embarc educators can expect the following lesson and unit flows.

Lesson Flow

- **Opening:** short, structured activity that bridges the previous learning activity to the upcoming learning activity.
- **Learning:** an activity that builds on the opening by deepening student understanding and giving safe practice time for learning.
- **Reflection/Closing:** short, structured activity that will wrap up the time together through reflective assessment

Unit Flow

- **Discover:** the stage of "discovery" begins with building a classroom culture and community through *team building activities*, *group projects*, and *discussions*. Building a foundation of collaboration and trust is essential for development throughout the year.
- **Understand:** the "understand" stage allows students to dig deeper into knowing who they are as individuals as they continue to strengthen the classroom community. This stage will require students to practice *reflection* as they consider their interests, passions, and goals for the future and plan out actions they can do now to see those goals come to fruition.
- **Lead:** the "lead" stage pushes students to take action. In this stage, students are given the tools and resources needed to plan out and lead an event for an identified audience. This event will require students to prepare, present, and reflect upon their learnings from the unit.

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Research from educational psychology shows that people best remember the first few moments and the last few moments of an experience" (Stanchfield, 2016). Below are a few options to build up your toolbox to make the first few moments and last few moments of each lesson memorable.

Options for Openers

*Note: Options listed are in order from least amount of time to implement to most amount of time to implement

Community Connector: A quick activity that gets students talking with one another and sharing about themselves. It is important to introduce activities that involve choice and control to build trust and safety within the community

- Temperature check: Each learner checks in with 1 - 3 words about how they are showing up in the space today.
- Guiding question: Each learner answers a guided question.
    - When asking students to share out loud, consider their comfort level as a community. If they are just getting to know each other, start with partner shares before moving to larger share outs. Partners can be formed by having learners pair up based on similarities in their shoes or by rotating through concentric circles to name a few.
- Object of importance: Invite learners to find something in their pockets or back packs to share with a partner. Encourage them to connect the object to an amusing or interesting story and share that with other learners.
- Gif wars: Have students share a gif or image to represent their answer to a personal question.
- Find my people: Have students form groups based on common answers to categories (i.e. number of siblings, favorite food, etc.)

Hook/Preview: a welcoming activity that draws learners attention to the present, creates context, and begins the process of group

- Quotes/Images: Choose quotes/images that relate to the theme/lesson/goals of the lesson and spread them around the room. Have learners choose the quote/image that most resonates with them and share with classmates why.
- Object metaphor: As participants enter the room, ask them to choose an object that represents their role in the group, or a strength or unique perspective they bring to

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building and reflection	the group. • Demonstration: Choose a video clip or demonstration that highlights a concept of the lesson and have learners share their noticings, wonderings, and predictions about what is to come. • Experience: Have students engage in an experience that pushes them to practice a skill or "live" a concept that will be revealed in the lesson. After the experience, push reflection that ties to the central learning of the lesson.
Activate students' prior knowledge: a quick way to engage students in the process of previous learning to upcoming learning	• Graffiti Wall: As students walk in, have them add a word, image, or symbol to a board that is labeled with a word associated with the upcoming lesson • Brain dump: In groups of 3 - 4, have students come up with as much information as they can about a theme/concept. • Reflection question: Ask learners to reflect on the previous class's learning. This could happen in place of doing reflection at the end of the previous lesson, or the reflection from the previous lesson can guide and remind students of the learning that occurred. • Trade-up: Ask students to write down an answer to a question regarding their knowledge of the concept in the upcoming lesson. They will then partner up and share their answers, trade, and move to a new partner with a new answer. This rotation can happen 3 - 4 times.

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Options for Closure

*Note: Options listed are in order from least amount of time to implement to most amount of time to implement

Embarc curriculum relies on students to reflect on their learning. Reflection should be ongoing and in the moment. It should weave in a variety of mediums and modalities. Below are some suggestions for how to build reflection into your rituals and routines.

Verbal and written

- One word reaction
- Celebrations and Appreciations
- Journal reflections
- Speed dating discussion: line students up in concentric circles and give them each one minute to answer a reflective question about their day, then rotate the inner circle one person to the left.
- Keys to success: individually or in groups, list the keys to success for that particular lesson or experience
- Recipe for success reflection: individually or in groups create a recipe for successful completion of that lesson or experience
- Postcard to your future self: have learners write a letter to their future self highlighting their experience and what they learned.

Visual

- Postcard: Spread images or postcards around the room and have students choose one based on a chosen reflective question. Example reflective questions could include:
  - What image would you send to a friend to describe your experience
  - What image represents a strength you demonstrated today?
- Memento of experience: have students choose an object that represents their learning for the day
- Graffiti wall: have students draw an image, word, or symbol on shared board to represent their learning from the day

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- Group jigsaw puzzle: Have each person design a puzzle piece that represents how they contributed to the experience
- Video documentary: have students create a documentary highlighting the experience and their learning.

Kinesthetic

- Strike a pose: that represents your experience and/or learning from the day
- Anyone Who: have learners name strengths or learning from the lesson and have students stand up if that strength or learning resonates with them.
- Charades: ask learners to write down a highlight of their experience, a moment worth celebrating, or an important lesson or take-away...use these as the cards for charades

Internal

- Silent walk: give students time to walk around and reflect on the experience on their own
- Meditation: share a word or image from the day and have students silently reflect on that word or image

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End of Unit Presentation Options

Class Presentations

Students participating in their first end of unit presentations, may be most comfortable presenting to their classmates who they have built a connection with over the past year. Below are a few formats to do that:

- Whole group presentations
- Triad presentations
- Rotating partner presentations

School Presentations

Students that want to include members of the school, outside of their Embarc cohort, may choose to do school presentations. Below are a few formats to do that:

- Assembly
- Gallery Walk
- Open House

Community Presentations

Students excited to share their learning with their community may choose to do community presentations. Below are a few formats to do that:

- Embarc night
- Community gala

Virtual Presentations

Students can also choose to reach a wider audience with a more flexible format through virtual presentations. Below are a few formats to do that:

- Live Google Meet
- Interactive slides
- Webpages with pre-recorded content

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